

# The Seven Principles of Man

## An Ancient Basis for a New Psychology

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*Theosophical Manuals Series*

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### Chapter 1

#### Introductory

Seven is one of the most important numbers in the teachings of theosophy, the wisdom-religion. It is a key by which are revealed and explained many of the mysteries of nature, for in theosophy it is taught that number and numbers underlie all the processes of creation. This numerical key of seven lies at the root of all evolution, whether physical or spiritual. It is therefore important both in its meanings and application.

There is nothing arbitrary about the use of seven as applied to the study of our composite constitution, as this number is found to be universal throughout the universe. We discover it everywhere. Some common facts are good instances of this, such as the seven layers of the human skin, the musical scale with its seven notes, and the seven colors which make up a ray of sunlight. Then there is the moon, which theosophy and science both show to have close relation to the generation of physical life on our planet. The moon is governed in its activities by the number seven. Note the recurrence of seven in the gestation period, the phases of the moon, with the week of seven days, etc. The inquirer has only to look observantly into the matter to find many other examples of the septenary in the world about him.

In Christianity we find the human nature divided by the apostle Paul into three elements: body, soul, and spirit. This division includes, however, the other four principles. Christian theology, while accepting this threefold division, tells us little about what soul really is, or what is the difference between soul and spirit. Nor can present-day psychology help us. The best known modern psychologists take into account only the lower ranges of soul activity. They study almost exclusively our *physiological* mentality, such emotions as fear, passionate desires, and the like. However, this is not surprising. For over a century science has regarded the human being as merely a developed ape whose inner life consists of highly specialized reactions to his environment, though a change in this point of view is now seen to be on the way. A number of psychologists are discovering that to regard the human soul as a complex of merely semi-physiological reactions does not begin to cover the ground. They acknowledge that such a point of view is destructive to all moral and spiritual

aspiration. It does not take into account the nature of our spiritual-mental activities. And they are beginning to admit that it is this higher side which is the more important.

Present-day psychology is the newest and most incomplete branch of modern science. How different it was in the great ancient civilizations! They were built around the Mystery-schools as a nucleus. And those great esoteric colleges taught a complete science of the soul, a subject which we moderns name psychology. These schools or colleges were the guardians of a sacred science which included everything about life, death, man, and the universe. It included the truths of religion, science, and philosophy in all their immense ranges.

Our present religions, philosophies, and sciences are but pale reflections of that ancient knowledge; or else they are new and incomplete growths arising from its remnants. This ancient system, which is referred to in theosophical works as the wisdom-religion, the secret doctrine, the esoteric philosophy or tradition, the archaic wisdom, etc., was known all over the ancient world. Clear evidence of this fact can be found by a study and comparison of the basic doctrines and symbolologies of all the old world-religions, including even the Bible. The same is true of the ancient great philosophies. Pythagoras, with his esoteric school at Crotona; Plato in his Academy at Athens; and the Stoics, of whom Marcus Aurelius is a celebrated example, all show, in spite of differences in the form of their systems, that they were teachers of the wisdom-religion. Evidence can also be found in archaeological remains the world over and in many other fields of research, should the reader be interested in this fascinating subject. (See also [The Esoteric Tradition](#) by G. de Purucker; and [The Mystery-Schools](#) by Grace F. Knoche.)

One of the most important of the teachings of these Mystery-schools was the sevenfold nature of the manifested universe, and of its offspring, man.

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## Chapter 2

### The Monad

An explanation of our composite nature with its seven principles must include a brief outline of what theosophy tells us about evolution. Evolution, as taught by the wisdom-religion, means an unwrapping, a rolling out; in other words, it is the growth into manifestation or activity of qualities which are latent and invisible in the inner nature of any being. The qualities of a living seed when first dropped into the soil are invisible and latent. But when the time and the conditions are ripe for growth these latent qualities begin to develop, to unwrap or roll out into visibility. An acorn, for example produces first a tiny shoot and then at last the magnificent and sturdy oak.

All organisms, that is, all living beings — plants, animals, men — grow from seeds. In the case of humans and most animals these seeds are so minute as to be invisible to any eye but that of the microscope. And yet one of these infinitesimal vital cells may grow into a six-foot man with all his complex faculties, or into the enormous elephant with its highly specialized organs.

What is it that causes this truly magical growth of an invisible seed into a wondrous individual, such as a great musician or inventor? Why is it that the law of development from within outwards, from invisibility into visibility, is at the root of evolution? It is because at the heart of every seed there is a living spirit-soul, *atma-buddhi*. This spirit-soul is a spark of the universal life-spirit. It is the urge to self-expression of this invisible spirit-soul at the core of every organism which causes it to expand, to unfold its own powers through the outward development of faculty and function. Of course it is fed and helped forwards by the stimulation of its environment. But unless there were this living spiritual urge present at its core, the seed would not expand and fructify. A dead seed will not grow, no matter how favorable its environment.

Again, modern science in its theories of evolution has confined its studies to the visible side of nature — the physical; although there are scientists whose researches are bringing them to a more comprehensive view. Not only the bodies, however, but the minds and souls of creatures, are subject to evolution. For if evolution is a law of nature then nothing can be excluded from the action of that law. In every particle of matter there is imprisoned a spark of the universal, indestructible LIFE. This spark is named in theosophy the monad, a word which means a "unit," an "individual." This monad is a point, a center of complete, individualized,

indestructible consciousness, originating, as said, in the central universal life. Such a monad lives at the core of every organism, from an atom to a star.

But these monads are in vastly differing degrees of evolution. The monad at the heart of, say, an atom in the mineral kingdom is much less evolved or unfolded than one which has reached, on its upward evolutionary journey of self-unfoldment, the vegetable or the animal kingdom. The monad at the core of a human being is immeasurably more advanced than either. The reason is that, during the ages of its progressive self-development through the stages of matter in all the lower kingdoms, it has now reached the point where it has so highly evolved its own latent intellectual and spiritual powers that it can at last manifest as a human being. The difference between this process, which is a *spiritual* one, and some of the erroneous ideas of Darwinian evolution is fully explained in [Man in Evolution](#) by G. de Purucker.

There is a monad at the core of every physical atom. The physical atom is the outmost body or vehicle through which the monad works and expresses itself. When it ensouls a chemical atom, the monad is starting near the bottom of the evolutionary ladder. And slowly through countless ages that monad passes from kingdom to kingdom of nature, advancing ever upward.

We can understand something of this process if we remember how a plant grows. Back of every plant is what may be called a plant-monad, in other words a spiritual monad passing through the vegetable phase of its evolutionary journey. A seed is dropped in the soil and immediately that conditions are right, the sleeping or latent energy locked within it begins the process of building up from the soil a plant-vehicle for itself. Similarly does the monad make for itself higher and higher vehicles as it passes upwards through the elemental, mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms — someday to blossom forth in the vesture of humanhood.

The reader will now begin to see that it is these monads whose activities not only produce, but *are* the very stuff of evolution. The monadic hosts, high, intermediate, and low in their scale of development, ensoul and build all manifestations of life visible and invisible to us — spiritual, intellectual, psychic, and physical. And they do this because of the spiritual urge at the heart of each monad, this urge being generated in its origin in the central universal fount of life.

It is these monads, with their inner life of urges, activities, and slowly unfolding characteristics, which make up the invisible parts of nature — that invisible world of inconceivably greater scope and range than our visible. Here in these inner realms work the vast hosts of invisible monads which are thus the *cause* of visible evolution.

Before passing on to consider ourselves as seven-principled beings, we shall answer a question that may have arisen in the mind of the student. He may ask: What is the purpose of all this monadic evolution from kingdom to kingdom and from range to range or plane to plane of evolving being? This purpose can be stated as follows: Each great solar period of evolution is called in theosophy a *manvantara*. In this solar period or manvantara the monad starts out at the very beginning as an unself-conscious god-spark. And the object of its passage through all the forms of life in that particular solar manvantara is that it may emerge from them as a fully self-conscious god. When the end of that solar period comes, a monad which has successfully completed its evolution will have first-hand knowledge of — will in fact have *been* — all the life-forms in that manvantara. It will have absorbed to itself at last the power self-consciously to understand and assimilate and use all those experiences. So it becomes a self-conscious god, a master of wisdom and life in that manvantara which it has just rounded out. In a later solar manvantara, the monad will go on to experience still higher levels of evolution and knowledge.

The monad at the center of each one of us is far on its way to becoming such a self-conscious god. And this of course means that you and I, who are in reality our own monads if we could only realize it, are destined to emerge at the close of this solar manvantara through which we are now passing as fully-fledged, all-understanding gods.

One of the most beautiful aspects of this teaching is that in thus mounting the evolutionary ladder of being we awaken and stimulate the evolutionary potencies of all the atoms and creatures which we contact on all the planes of experience. It is a law of the universe — in other words it is in the very nature of things — that we

cannot ourselves rise without lifting everything else to some degree. The ethical implications in responsibility and karmic consequences are easily apparent. But let us now go back to our subject of the seven human principles.

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## Chapter 3

### The Higher Triad

We ourselves, however, are not just a monad working through a physical body. We are the product of several different lines of evolution combined into that composite nature with which we are all so familiar. It would not be possible for a monad to work directly through a human body. The monad is pure spirit-consciousness, but the body is made of matter which is too dense and sluggish for the monad to work upon it directly. It would burn the body up, just as electricity would consume the physical flesh. So intermediate elements between the monad and body are needed. These must be of a more ethereal and spiritually sensitive nature than physical matter because they have to act as transformers. They must step down or conduct the spiritual energies of the monad into the physical organism. Then the directing power of the monad can inspire and shape our evolution through the experiences of human life. It must be remembered too that the monad which works through a human being is immensely more evolved and powerful than the comparatively unevolved monad acting, for example, through the form of a vegetable atom.

One of the more ethereal forms of energy-substance used by the monad as a vehicle to step down or transfer its energies to this earth plane is mind. Mind is a very definite line of human evolution. Our minds are developing all the time on their own lines while our bodies are growing and developing along theirs. And we also carry on mental evolution side by side with the spiritual evolution of the monad above, as well as the evolution of the body and its vital energies below. Mind is the link between the body and the monad.

And now we understand something more of Paul's meaning when he divided human nature into body, soul, and spirit. Soul is the intermediate portion of human nature, and the higher part of that soul is mind or intellect.

Before going farther and showing how these three elements resolve themselves naturally into seven, a question which has probably already occurred to the reader should be answered. Where do these human principles come from? The monad, as we have already seen, takes its rise, and is an emanation from, the universal cosmic life or spirit. It is in one sense the person himself, his immortal root-principle. But what is the origin of the mind?

Mind as a principle is latent in the monad. For the monad, springing as it does from the central fire of cosmic spirit, contains within itself the seeds or possibilities of everything, even as everything is contained within its cosmic origin. The part contains everything that the whole contains. One spark is of the same nature throughout as the flame which throws it off. One drop of the ocean is in miniature all that the whole ocean is. So each monad holds within itself, as being a part of the cosmic whole, all the elements and potencies and possibilities that evolution can unfold in the life span of this our universe. But in the beginning of this universal life span these potencies are latent, asleep, undeveloped. Then, as the ages pass, and the monad journeys on its evolutionary pilgrimage from the invisible spiritual and causal worlds "outward" into the visible world of forms and effects, latent potencies — mineral, vegetable, animal — are gradually unwrapped, unfolded, evolved. Finally the time comes when the monad is ready to take upon itself humanhood. It has advanced to the point where it has completely developed all its lower faculties and is now ready for evolution along mental and intellectual lines.

It was at this point then, ages ago in our evolution, that occurred what H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* calls "the incarnation of the manasaputras." As already explained, the monad is far above this human plane — too far for it to be able to awaken even the intellectual principle in the human constitution. For this reason at first the manasic or mind element was then still "asleep." This state of things has been explained as follows:

The course of evolution developed the lower principles and produced at last the form of man with a brain of better and deeper capacity than that of any other animal. But this man in form was not man in

mind, and needed the fifth principle, the thinking, perceiving one, to differentiate him from the animal kingdom and to confer the power of becoming self-conscious. — W. Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 53

Thus the intellect of the now almost human being overshadowed by its monad needed a spark, an impulse to awaken it into consciousness of itself.

This spark or awakening touch was given to those evolved human vehicles of the monad by the sons of universal mind. They are called in esoteric tradition the *manasaputras*, or "sons of mind." These beings called manasaputras are a hierarchy, or range or class, of spiritual entities. They perfected their intellectual evolution in a long, long past cycle of what was equivalent to human experience in a now vanished system of worlds. For this reason the highest of these manasaputras are by this time advanced in their evolution to the status of cosmic gods. They are great consciousnesses who make up, who are, the hierarchy of intellectual self-consciousness in our universe. As a great hierarchy or group they are what Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* referred to as *mahat*, or the universal mind.

It was these manasaputras or sons of cosmic mind who gave the spark, the creative impulse, which awakened mind in the human vehicle already evolved for that purpose by the monad.

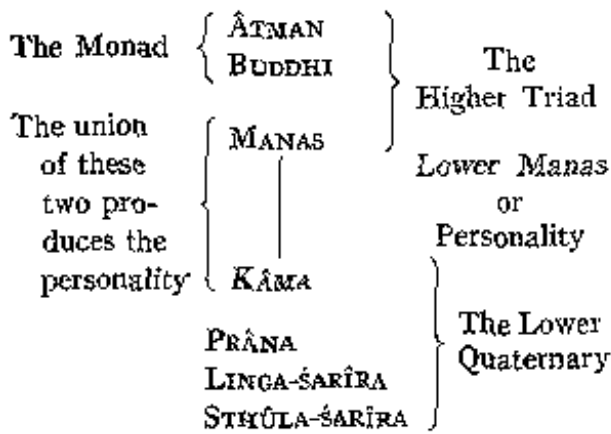
This process was something like the lighting of a candle. You cannot have a flame unless you have the fuel prepared in some definite form ready for lighting. Even a bonfire must be started from carefully laid fuel. In the case of the lighting of mind in the evolved human vehicle, man might thus be compared to a candle. He was a psychological vehicle or instrument evolved by the overshadowing monad through long ages of evolution. The forces of nature also contributed, so that when the time came that the creative flash could be given by the manasaputras, a flame would spring up, never again to be extinguished. Thus what then was human only in form became in actuality *manas*, a thinker. And this thinking principle linked the monad more or less directly to the animal nature, and human evolution was thus immensely quickened.

It was then, as said, that man first became truly man. For what differentiates a human being from an animal? Is it not mind, the power to think, to reason, to plan? Man is not guided by instinct alone as the beasts are. He is self-conscious. Sharply developed in him is the ego, the part which realizes, "I am I, and not anyone else. I am myself, not my environment. I am separate from all other things. I can influence or control these other things and bend them to my own uses, and so control my environment. Thus I can shape my destiny to suit myself."

Man alone has this power of self-conscious free will. He has the power of self-directed choice. And this he derives from manas the ego, the self-conscious thinker, awakened in him by the manasaputras. But, if this is the case, why is it, at present at least, that we do not show more power of free will over ourselves and our destiny? For the answer to this important question the reader is referred to [Mahatmas and Chelas](#) and *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 180-6. It is this manas, this thinker, which in its higher aspects forms the third element of what we call the higher human triad. But before studying the other two principles which make up this higher triad, let us take a quick glance over the whole of composite human nature.

In the following diagram it is interesting to note that Sanskrit words are used to describe the different aspects of our septenary constitution. This is made necessary by the limitations of European languages. Western science, religion, and philosophy have so long forgotten the knowledge of the metaphysical and spiritual facts of being that no words have been developed to indicate or describe these higher and lower states of consciousness. But in the Orient the ancient sacred science — theosophy or the esoteric tradition — has been kept alive. Thus we find in the Sanskrit language, all ready for use, the words needed to make these seven principles easily understandable to those unfamiliar with them. And another reason for the use of Sanskrit is that these terms will then be the same in all languages, thus avoiding the translation of lengthy descriptions.

In the following diagram, the brackets indicate the relationships and some of the interactions of the seven principles.



It will be noticed first of all that what we have called the monad appears to be dual — composed of two principles, atman and buddhi. And yet we have been speaking all along of the monad as a *unit* of consciousness. But when these two principles are understood, their inseparable existence in human evolution will be understood.

The Sanskrit word *atman* means "self." Every being anywhere, no matter how small, no matter how great, is a self. All these multimyriad selves are derived from the cosmic self, the universal atman or cosmic life, as sparks are derived from their originating flame. There is the self or atman of our universe from which is derived the atman, the informing consciousness, of the solar system; and so on down the mighty scale of evolving beings until we reach mankind. And below mankind every being in all the kingdoms including atoms and electrons and elementals is a monadic self derived from the universal atman or self of the universe.

At the root of our being dwells *our* atman, the I AM, our self — our sense of existence, of being alive. This sense of I AM is universal. It is the same in all creatures. And it is universal and the same in all because the inmost spiritual consciousness of every organism is an integral part of the universal self or atman, as a drop is an integral part of the encompassing ocean. And each single drop is like in composition and nature to every other drop and to the whole ocean itself.

This consciousness of I AM is sometimes difficult to understand, if we have never thought about it before. We are all so familiar with the ego — it is about all that we know of ourselves. We are steeped in the consciousness of our *differentness* from everyone else. However, we can get some idea of what is meant by watching the young babe. Or we can find it in ourselves when we first awake in the morning — aware of being alive and comfortable but not yet aroused to the sharp edges of our daily lives.

Atman, the I AM sense in each one of us, is universal and therefore unlike the ego or manas from which we derive our sense of "I am I." For this ego-sense is different in every person while, as said, the sense of pure selfhood, of being alive and active, is the same in all creatures, whether human or otherwise. The understanding of this basic selfhood of universal origin in each of us leads to the realization of true spiritual brotherhood and develops all our highest, because spiritual, powers.

It has already been noted that atman, the heart of the monad, is in its nature too far above this human plane to work directly here. So the first vehicle or garment with which it clothes itself is buddhi. This word *buddhi* imbodyes the idea, "to *awaken*." Thus the buddhic faculty in human beings leads to understanding, seeing into things, because it makes us awake or aware. How many there are who are still asleep — unawakened! They are not interested in the common life of humanity — in other people, in the horror of world conditions. Enough if they and theirs have a job and a car and a chance to enjoy life! But the person who has begun to think, to question, to seek, is waking up, particularly if his interest spreads out irresistibly from his own problems to an interest in the problems of others.

Buddhi as a principle is spiritual consciousness of the highest kind existing in that grade of evolution to which mankind belongs. When viewed from the universal standpoint of atman, buddhi is a garment or veil or vehicle of primary substance. But this "substance" is so close to the plane of the divine that viewed from below, from the standpoint of our comparatively gross mentality, it is pure consciousness. And so we can

describe buddhi as spiritual consciousness. Dr. de Purucker in his *Occult Glossary* thus explains this principle:

Buddhi is the principle or organ in man which gives to him spiritual consciousness, and is the vehicle of the most high part of man — the atman. Buddhi is the faculty in man which manifests as understanding, judgment, discrimination, etc., and it is an inseparable veil or garment of the atman.

The use of this word "inseparable" explains why we can speak of the monad when viewed from our point of view as a unit.

Buddhi steps down the energies of atman to manas, the ego. From the standpoint of the ego, buddhi is practically a universal principle. It is therefore the seat or organ of impersonal love, that "love of all creatures" which is divine. And in the same sense buddhi is the origin of human conscience, our sense of rectitude and duty. Conscience is rooted in our feeling of duty towards others. It is also a sense of what is right. The right thing is the universal thing — that which everyone ought to do when acting in harmony with spiritual law and order. The ego is willful — seeks itself and its own way. Buddhi moves us to the sacrifice of egotistical feelings and actions to the principle of universal good.

A study of the higher triad with its different aspects and their practical relation to our daily problems would be one of the greatest contributions to psychology ever made. For the ancient wisdom teaches us to seek and to realize and make use of the almost unlimited spiritual powers which are stored there. It shows how to use them for the mastery of the lower animal and selfish nature by the higher triad. It is of incomparably greater utility and inspiration than digging into the libido and other underground byways of poor human nature. And as the student goes deeper into this study, he learns the sharp and important difference between the spiritual and the personal will — a knowledge which will be of simply inestimable value to him. These points will become clear after reading Chapter 5 of this Manual.

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## Chapter 4

### The Lower Quaternary

We have outlined thus far a necessarily brief description of the atman and the buddhic principles in our constitution, as well as of manas, the ego. We now come to a consideration of those sides of human nature with which we average men and women are more familiar — the principles which comprise our lower quaternary.

The lower quaternary, as the name implies, consists of four principles: kama, prana, linga-sarira, and sthula-sarira. These four working together form the vehicle in which the ego, overshadowed and guided by atma-buddhi, reimbodies itself on this earth — in a word, reincarnates.

#### KAMA

The Sanskrit word *kama* means desire. At first thought we may get the idea of kama as something low in the scale of human qualities, but such is not necessarily the case.

Kama is the driving or impelling force in the human constitution; per se it is colorless, neither good nor bad, and is only such as the mind and soul direct its use. It is the seat of the living electric impulses, desires, aspirations, considered in their energetic aspect. Usually however, although there is a divine kama as well as an infernal one, this word is restricted, and wrongly so, to evil desire almost exclusively. — G. de Purucker, *Occult Glossary*

Also, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we find Krishna, who is the personified self of the cosmos, telling his disciple Arjuna:

In all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness. — 7:54

Of course in the average man or woman desire is limited as a rule to narrow personal interests and certainly therefore it is not high in quality. We can better understand the range of this principle if we compare the



desires of a Christ or a Buddha, in their compassionate self-dedication to the needs of the world, with the desires which motivate a gangster — these being examples of extreme aspects of the human kamic principle.

In the average person desire is neither very high nor very low. It is the work of evolution to train us through experience in many lives to raise the quality of our desires, for these desires obviously form a powerful element in the development of character and therefore of evolution. Unfortunately, due to ignorance and selfishness, people too often use the vital powers of desire and will to secure success for themselves regardless of the rights and welfare of others. So we create disharmony and suffer sooner or later the consequences. This being an ethical universe we have thus had to learn mostly through suffering.

## PRANA

*Prana* signifies "life principle" — vitality. It forms the psycho-electrical field, bounded by the organism, like the air in the lungs. Prana keeps the astral-physical organisms of all creatures alive and growing. It permeates the linga-sarira and the physical body from birth to death with ever-renewing currents of vital-magnetic energies. Prana also accounts for the falling to pieces of an organism. The death of an organism is caused in the first place by the prolonged wearing-down of that organism by streams of pranic energy which at last bring it to the point of dissolution. Both death and — as even science is beginning to suspect — sleep come not from the failure of life but from its excess.

## LINGA-SARIRA

This is the "model-body" upon which the physical body is formed. It is like a matrix or mold of ethereal matter into which the atoms of the physical body are built. It is often called the astral body. William Q. Judge wrote of it:

The astral body is made of matter of very fine texture as compared with the visible body, and has a great tensile strength, so that it changes but little during a lifetime, while the physical alters every moment. . . . The matter of which it is composed is electrical and magnetic in its essence, . . . The astral body is the guiding model for the physical one, and all the other kingdoms have the same astral model. — *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 39

It is this astral model, flushed with prana, that preserves our physical identity. We have been told by scientists that within a period of seven years, more or less, the matter of the physical body is completely renewed. Each day we lose atoms which are replaced by others. We are therefore different physical beings today from what we were, say, ten years ago. What is it then that keeps our bodies in shape, so that in spite of this continual flux of entering and departing atoms, which is going on continuously all our lives, each body yet retains its own characteristics of structure? This marvel is due to the model-body which, existing within the physical, molecule for molecule and cell for cell, holds its form so that even scars, deformities, or mere wrinkles are perpetuated.

There is another point which should also be emphasized:

The astral body has in it the real organs of the outer sense organs. In it are the sight, hearing, [taste], power to smell, and the sense of touch. — *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 42

In the case of marking by being born legless, the idea and strong imagination of the mother act so as to cut off or shrivel up the astral leg, and the result is that the molecules, having no model of leg to work on, make no physical leg whatever — and similarly in all such cases. But where we find a man who still feels the leg which the surgeon has cut off, or perceives the fingers that were amputated, then the astral member has not been interfered with, and hence the man feels as if it were still on his person. For knife or acid will not injure the astral model, but in the first stages of its growth ideas and imagination have the power of acid and sharpened steel. — *Ibid.*, p. 41

The astral body or linga-sarira is made of astral matter or substance. Speaking generally, it might be said, of course, that it is made of what science used to call ether. Theosophy, however, can explain much more about the ether than science. The aether or astral light or, to give it its technical name in theosophy, the *akasa* is, like everything else, sevenfold. Its highest or innermost levels or reaches are the home of our higher principles. Its



lower and grosser levels surround our earth and we call them the astral light. All people cannot see the astral light in the way that they can see the surrounding air because they have not developed the astral faculties to enable them to see it.

Psychics and clairvoyants see its faintly luminous coils. It is this star-like luminosity that originated the name "astral." These sensitives have developed in themselves the astral senses which correspond in their range of activity to the astral plane. But these so-called visions of clairvoyants are seldom anything but glimpses into the lower levels of the astral light. These levels are the ones closest to and surrounding the earth. They are a welter of images and influences produced upon and within astral matter by mankind's unregulated and often evil emotions, thoughts, and desires. Hence these visions are not only misleading but frequently dangerous.

At the moment of death, when the spirit-soul lets go of all the lower principles, they fall apart. The astral body then separates out from the physical but does not leave it, as they belong together. And as the physical body disintegrates, the astral likewise slowly passes away.

## STHULA-SARIRA

There are certain interesting facts connected with the physical body, or sthula-sarira, which theosophy has always taught but which physical science has only recently discovered. One of these facts is that physical matter is mostly holes. We are now told by scientists that if all the material spread out in this seemingly solid body of ours were collected into a compact mass, it would actually occupy a space about the size of a pin head!

The body, therefore, though appropriately called the sthula-sarira or "gross body," is really foam-like, full of vacant spaces, something like a sponge. This is one of the many paradoxes or seeming contradictions which abound throughout nature and which make the study of her processes so fascinating. The grosser a substance *appears* the more foamy it actually is, and therefore the more illusory. Our bodies appear solid because they are formed of particles of matter in such inconceivably rapid motion that to our senses they seem as if solid. Just as when we whirl a lighted stick fast enough we see what appears to be a complete circle of fire. This indicates one great lesson that we may learn from a consideration of physical matter — that the real things, the permanent things, are invisible to our physical senses. We do not even see physical matter, but only the forms which it takes in the incomprehensible rapidity of its vibrations.

The sthula-sarira illustrates for us another basic spiritual fact of the cosmos. For it is a convenient example of the law of analogy, "As above so below; as it is below, so is it above." In other words, the physical body being, in its substances, structures, and functions, an offspring of the universal cosmic life, it is itself a cosmos in miniature. This being the case, a knowledge of what takes place in physical bodies will, in the light of the archaic teachings of theosophy, reveal to us and illustrate faithfully the processes of the invisible spiritual worlds. As Blavatsky tells us:

*Analogy is the guiding law in Nature, the only true Ariadne's thread that can lead us, through the inextricable paths of her domain, toward her primal and final mysteries. — The Secret Doctrine 2:153*

The use of this law of analogy therefore — in the action of the nervous system and the circulation of the blood, the nuclear structure of the cells, and many other facts — will provide a wonderful key to the understanding and application of the deeper teachings in regard to the structure and operations of the invisible and causal worlds. To the ignorant the body is a gross drag upon spiritual experience. But when kept in its proper place, controlled and intelligently used, the body has its own basic part to play in our evolution. For without it, how could we function in human life, where we are daily gaining such rich lessons in experience and development?

The relation of the sthula-sarira to our evolution may be viewed in two ways:

(1) It is our vehicle of contact with physical nature, and also with human life where we gain necessary lessons in experience and consequent development. Besides, without a complete knowledge of all the aspects of nature, divine, spiritual, mental, emotional, vital, astral, and physical, we would never reach the complete evolution of all our faculties.

(2) The sthula-sarira enables our higher principles to act not only upon our own physical atoms but also upon the atoms throughout the whole range of our physical and mental contacts. And this dynamic influence helps unconsciously in the evolution of all those atoms, particularly those used in our own body. We must remember that at the heart of every atom is a spirit-soul or monad pouring through it the urge to unfoldment and growth. And the effect of human will and evolutionary desires upon these developing monad-atoms is continuous and immense. So that the physical body has its definite and vital use in our development.

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## Chapter 5

### Kama-Manas — The Personality

The everyday self which we live with and imagine that we know thoroughly is called the personality. But it is precisely this personality of whose elements we are so ignorant. And this is true not only of the man in the street but even of the professor of the modern so-called science of psychology. For some of the most popular explanations of the human psychological nature are delvings into what we have already spoken of as the cellar regions, the lower physiological side, of the human psyche or soul.

The whole drama of human life, made up of the struggle within us between the forces of good and evil, centers around the personality. Why is this? If you look at the diagram you will see. It is because the personality is dual, twofold. It is a compound, a resultant of the mingling of the nature of manas, the thinking ego, with kama. It may do no harm to repeat that the kind of kama exhibited by the ordinary person is selfish passionate desire. It is only the rarest human beings who know much about the higher aspects of kama, such as divine desire, although there are many men and women whose compassionate humanitarian interests and activities are lifting them slowly to those highest planes of desire. Therefore the technical name in theosophy for the personality is kama-manas. And as humanity is at present constituted, this name is more expressive than manas-kama, there being as said but very few in whom the thinker takes precedence over selfish emotions, or reason over impulse.

Kama-manas or the personality is the instrument, the vehicle, by which the monad with its spiritual urges and energies is brought into remote control of this mental-material world. All evolution is produced by original monadic urges and energies poured down or outward through our less spiritual principles. If the monad were to withdraw its presence, as it does at death, the principles would fall apart and the man would disappear from this physical world.

This personality of ours has been built up in its kamic parts by the monad in its passage or pilgrimages through the lower stages or kingdoms of nature, as already explained. During that time it fashioned what is sometimes called the animal soul, another name for our kamic nature. And then when this kamic soul was ready, it was touched into self-consciousness, awakened to humanhood, by the infusion of the divine intellectual fire of the manasaputras. Thus kama-manas came into action. It is the combination of the animal soul and the thinking, self-conscious nature in the human constitution.

This personality then began to reincarnate as the vehicle for its higher manas. It took human form again and again, life after life on this earth. But all this time while man has been developing his faculties of will power, imagination, reason, creative intellect, and the like, the instincts and desires of the animal or kamic self have been strengthening and developing too, by the very reason of their dynamic alliance with manas. They have become strong, self-centered, and self-demanding. Thus the two forces in human nature, the spiritual and the animal, have been at war all down the ages. The lower kama-manasic self always urges to passion, strife, and selfishness; the higher manasic ego, inspired by atma-buddhi, slowly through innumerable incarnations has been striving for spiritual mastery.

In this way the lower and material principles are inspired or urged forward in self-unfoldment and are thus slowly transformed and developed from material into spiritual energies. For this is the purpose of life and the object of evolution — to raise the mortal into immortality.

So that today we see our nature hovering upon the point of balance between self-indulgence and self-mastery, the animal and godlike in human nature. And this condition in the individual is naturally reflected in the mass.

The present condition of our world well illustrates the situation. Nations, on the one hand, are urged by ideals of peace, international fraternity, and cooperation. On the other hand, they are goaded by greed, ignorance, and the clamor of selfish national interests. It was this very condition which was foreseen by the great teachers, the mahatmas who through the work of H. P. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society. At the same time they restored to us the knowledge which will enable the spirit-soul working through our higher nature, both in the individual and in the mass, to win the final victory over selfishness and hatred.

Katherine Tingley once wrote, "Impersonal love is the secret of life." It is the cure for all present evils, both individual and collective. By "impersonal" is meant self-forgetful love. Even more, it means love for all beings, no matter whether base or noble, no matter how different or hostile to us or dear and close to our hearts. By silencing the kama-manas, the selfish demanding personality, we begin to understand, to love, and to *know* in a wonderful new way, bringing us happiness and peace. Becoming quick to love, and so to understand and forgive, irritation and criticism and resentment fall away from us. No matter what happens we shall then never hinder or be unkind but always try to help. Ultimately we shall go farther still and come to understand and forgive our enemies — the happiest state of all. Broadening then gradually our sympathies, we extend our love to include all nations as well as our own beloved land. And thus we eventually become a power for universal good.

There are truly magical powers wrapped up in our higher nature — creative powers which are even now feebly illustrated by intuitive imagination and disciplined will; with the unselfish impulses of our deepest hearts which lead to grand humanitarian activities; and all our dreams and visions and urges towards that spiritual genius which is beginning to unfold in humanity even today. But these seeds of magical powers will not sprout — they cannot — while our whole attention and desires are concentrated merely upon business interests, selfish self-evasive pleasures, and the race to keep up with or get ahead of everyone else. We are not expected of course to neglect or abandon necessary material pursuits; but in changing our inner *objective* we seize our present opportunity to develop the aspect of kama already referred to as divine desire.

The impulse to bless with unselfish service our family or friends, to take an honorable part in civic or national betterment, to give help and consolation to those in sorrow or need — these impulses spring from our spiritual monad, atma-buddhi. Under this magic sunshine the dark side of the kamic principle will wither away; divine kama will come into action and coalesce with lower manas. Duality will disappear and the two will become welded into a perfect vehicle, a luminous personality, through which the spiritual monad, our inner god, may pour its divine energies into our human hearts. Such men were Jesus the Christ and Gautama the Buddha.

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## Chapter 6

### We Are Rooted in a Sevenfold Universe

The sevenfold nature of the universe has already been referred to. One of the most important teachings of theosophy tells us that all we see of the real universe is but its outermost or physical parts. The other six parts are invisible to us. They are built of more ethereal matters than physical and move to higher and finer rates of vibration. We cannot sense them because we have not yet developed the etheric sense organs or the finer perceptions which could reveal them to us. So that six-sevenths of the great organism of Mother Nature is hidden from us at present, just as in the structure of light there are ranges of vibration beginning with the ultraviolet at one end and the infrared at the other. These are either too rapid or too slow to be perceived by our organ of vision, but they nevertheless have a very marked effect upon our health and in other departments of the world of physical causes.

The fact that all things are moved and motivated by inner invisible energies and their living urges, we see around us even in our physical world. A flower or a tree — is not its life of distributing sap, of color transmutation and growth, unseen by us in all but its effects? And a rock is held together by the attractions and repulsions of the atoms and electrons which form the imperceptible side of its structure. This fact of the physical and exterior being "worked from within" is what we call a law, being universal throughout nature.

Thus these inner and invisible realms are the causal or creative worlds. They produce the physical universe. Nature as we see it around us is but the multifold physical organism through which these inner realms of creative evolution work. But nature is much more than this. It should properly be called universal nature, "nature spiritual and material with all the countless hierarchical ranges between." (*The Esoteric Tradition*, 3rd & rev. ed., p. 2)

The foregoing will be easier to grasp if we think of it as exemplified in our own human experience. Take our nearest and dearest. All that we can see of them is their physical appearance and activities. But that is the very least of their meaning to us. It is their inner complex invisible selves that we love — their sympathy, intellectual or temperamental fascination, or their moral beauty. These are the person. Someone who at first acquaintance may have seemed physically ugly to us becomes at last beautiful because of a noble or loving character. Or another who at first sight charmed because of physical beauty may end in being actually ugly to us when the real nature is discovered to be selfish or cruel. So with the world around us. It is made up of inner forces and invisible creative energies which are the reality of which physical nature is but the face and form.

There is a direct relationship between the invisible six-sevenths of human beings and the invisible six-sevenths of nature. In either case the physical aspect is the lowest or seventh principle, the body or sthula-sarira. And as we derive our bodies from the earth and our vitality indirectly from the physical sun, so we derive our invisible six principles from the six invisible principles of universal nature.

"But," someone perhaps objects here, "it has already been said that we derive all of our principles from the monad. The monad, you have told us, emanates buddhi, its envelope or garment of spiritual intelligent substance. Then buddhi produces manas, manas unfolds kama, and so on down the sevenfold ladder of being. But now you say that man derives his principles from the seven principles of nature. There seems to be a contradiction here."

No, because it is just as we see it in human experience. How often we hear the query as to character and environment. Which is the more powerful in shaping a person's life — his inborn character or the environment into which he is born? In the last analysis we must agree that while environment is tremendously important, character must actually lead in formative power. Otherwise we should never see those cases of people born in poverty who have raised themselves to the pinnacles of achievement. The well-known phrase, a self-made man, has sprung from this fact — that the real directing power of a person's life is within himself. When strong enough it cannot be nullified by his surroundings.

Our own characteristic principles spring from our spiritual individuality, the monad. But these principles of ours are also acted upon by the external principles of nature. An acorn will produce only an oak tree. But the acorn is fed by water from the air and chemicals in the soil. It later draws in solar vitality to build up its cells and produce color in its leaves and blossoms. Man likewise, the divine seed of the universe, draws sustenance from the surrounding seven principles of nature. The astral body cannot be fed from the earth, only by its own elements contained in the lower levels of the ether. And so on up the scale. Each principle draws its sustenance from higher and higher levels of the invisible six higher principles of nature.

All our principles are dual. Not dual in the sense of being in two parts like a box and its cover, but two in action in the same way that the electric magnet has a positive and a negative pole. Every principle has an energetic, that is a positive consciousness side, and a substance or negative side. And it is through this latter that the consciousness which derives from the monad is able to work on the lower planes of being. The consciousness side is spiritual electricity derived from the life-force of the monad. The material side is drawn by the magnetic attractions of this life force from the reservoirs of life-atoms of the corresponding principles in sevenfold nature.

We must also remember that the monad itself is an integral part of *spiritual* nature. It is an emanation of the root-consciousness of our universe, the cosmic self, and expresses its homogeneous energy through its immediate vehicle buddhi. So that we realize that just as we derive our physical energy indirectly from the sun, we derive our spiritual life indirectly through the monad from the spiritual energies of universal nature. It might be added here that the sun and all the planets are likewise sevenfold. And it is these inner principles of the solar system to which theosophy refers when it speaks of the inner worlds. It is in the relation of our seven

principles to the seven principles of the sun and some of its planets that the explanation of this whole matter lies.

This subject is one of the most fascinating of all the theosophical teachings, involving the glorious destiny of mankind with its experiences and adventures in the inner worlds. But it is too wide-reaching and important to be dealt with adequately here.

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## Chapter 7

### An Ancient Basis for a New Psychology

The final test of any idea lies in its power of practical application to the difficulties of human life. Can it help us to develop and strengthen character? Will it lead us into more satisfactory human relationships, giving a greater understanding of our fellows with consequent capacity to help them? Will it give us a larger power to control environment and direct our own destiny? Theosophy answers that the knowledge it confers of the composite nature of man puts into our hands the practical means which enable us to do all these things. And thus it gives us the basis of a sound and workable psychology.

Psychology is one of the most popular subjects in our present-day world. Its uses and implications are evident even to the thoughtless. Such expressions as "the psychology of salesmanship," "mass psychology," etc., indicate how widely spread is the perception of the importance, for success in any field, of understanding the basic principles of human nature. And the use of every form of commercial or political slogan to create consumer or voter psychology illustrates this point.

If a person will study himself but for one day he will be amazed to see the wide range of moods, impulses, and character trends that his thoughts and actions will exhibit. And he will also be astonished to find how very little he knows about what goes on in his inner self. He will come to realize that he is almost completely at the mercy of these shifting currents of consciousness upon which he is more or less dangerously drifting — dangerous because of his ignorance of the source or the meaning of these contradictions within himself.

In fact, it is the almost universal *discontinuity* of human nature that shows how composite we are. And this rather highbrow statement means that the inability of the average person to hold one line of thought or feeling or willing for any considerable length of time indicates that there are different and opposing elements in his make-up. These prevent him from continuing in the same frame of mind or feeling for very long at one time. Obviously, then, until we master these opposing elements — bring them into harmony and learn to direct them — they will continue to run amuck in our lives. But to be able to master them, must we not begin by knowing what and where they are?

Then we go a step farther and examine the dual personality — how it works, how to understand it and direct its energies. For here in this dual personality is where the battle is waged in the evolution of the human being into something higher. It is in the struggle between the personal and the divine.

This struggle, as already pointed out in Chapter 5, centers in the dual personality. And this personality is dragged down now by its alliance with kama, and now uplifted and purified by its union with higher manas. H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy* gives us a very clear and complete analysis of this dual psychology in human nature. At one point she tells us of the

*essential, inherent, characteristic, heaven-aspiring mind (higher Manas) and . . . the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalised owing to the superiority of the human brain, the Kama-tending or lower Manas. — p. 184*

We must get a practical conception of these two elements in ourselves. We must learn how to recognize each element in its workings in our daily lives; how to cultivate the higher manas and how to transform its lower kama-manasic side into an instrument or vehicle for the use of the higher manas. Until we have this knowledge and can put it into self-conscious operation, we will be at the mercy, not only of our moods and weaknesses, but will also react injuriously to the moods and weaknesses of others.

Self-consciousness means self-recognition. It is the power of manas as the thinker to realize itself as a separate individual being, different in character and capacities from all other beings. From this follows a recognition of our relationship with others and to our environment — what these mean to us and how to react to them.

It is in this field of self-consciousness that free will in man first arises. Through his recognition of himself in relation to others and to his environment there comes home to him a realization of his power to develop himself and use his circumstances and relationships to further his own desires and aims. But it is here in this field of self-consciousness that the struggle of duality in his nature takes place. Recognizing these facts, man can apply them to the selfish personal ends of the animal nature below, or he can subject his personal will to the silent but ever present demands of the higher manas. Here at this point, as said, the struggle of human evolution concentrates.

As man progresses he learns to control and to dedicate the lower kamic nature to the service of the higher manas. If he fails to do this, he deteriorates. If he uses his self-conscious free will to injure others — or even only for his own personal ends — he makes the kind of karma that produces sufferings and failure. Yet, even so, through these sufferings and failures he slowly learns and develops. And at last through many lives the personality is brought to realize that only the alliance with higher manas can bring peace and happiness.

When we reach this point we first know true freedom. Knowledge of the *spiritual* psychology taught by theosophy convinces us that only when the will voluntarily subjects itself to the good of others does it become really free. A person acting entirely from selfish animal instinct is merely willful. And he suffers as a slave to fear and envy and every form of personal frustration. He only imagines himself to be free.

We may use an extreme case to illustrate this important point. Compare the man of civic virtue, who willingly lives in entire conformity with the equitable laws of his community, with the hunted existence of the habitual law-breaker. Most criminals pass the greater part of their lives in prison, while the more notorious ones who may escape imprisonment live under the heel of some petty criminal dictator who, like themselves, is generally short lived. But the man who obeys the ethical dictates of brotherhood and gladly adjusts his life to the laws of his country enjoys freedom of body, mind, and spirit.

Moreover, in exact proportion as we consciously discipline our free will by conforming to the good of others do we expand in consciousness. For this attitude means that we are turning the personality to the light and power of higher manas, and are thus opening our whole lower nature to the divine.

The reason why in following this course we are expanding our daily consciousness and opening our lower selves to the divine, lies in the nature of buddhi and atman. Atman, as already explained, is the ray of the cosmic universal self which dwells at the innermost center of each of us. It is identical in us all, being therefore the root of universal brotherhood. Atman is pure divine consciousness at one with the universal source from which it springs.

Buddhi is the divine vehicle of universal consciousness. It is emanated from atman. Buddhi therefore partakes of the universal nature of atman. Within buddhi lie all the universal potencies of atman — impersonal love of all creatures, genius in its highest and divine expression, intelligence in its most glorious and abstract power.

Thinking this over we see that when any personality strongly turns to higher manas and obeys its mandates of love and compassion and self-dedication to the universal and the real, it brings itself under the quickening power of the buddhic radiance. For this buddhic radiance broods like a divine presence over the nature and activities of higher manas. This radiance is always there. But most personalities are so saturated and obscured in a fog of selfishness and petty personal interests that the pure rays of the buddhic splendor cannot penetrate to their brain-minds.

But when, through deliberate self-discipline, these fogs are cleared away, then manas is free to ally itself with buddhi without hindrance. It is no longer preoccupied with the effort to control the distracting struggles of the kama-manas. When this happy time arrives, then the buddhic power of impersonal love, the stimulation of divine and creative intellect, will quicken all the lower man. Unsuspected faculties and powers will begin to

unfold in the hitherto limited personality. It will grow almost daily in peace and happiness and the ability to help and bless those with whom it lives.

This is why virtue and unselfishness are truly and literally their own reward. And this too is why the practice of brotherhood and the spiritual discipline of the human will can lead to a magnificent expansion of consciousness. Such people, living under the glory of the buddhic splendor, are on the way to becoming gods in human form.

If the student will compare this system of truly spiritual psychology with the other systems in vogue today, he will see how much farther it goes in explaining himself to himself and in throwing light upon the complex world of people about him.

The following passage from G. de Purucker's *Fundamentals of the Esoteric Philosophy* will be illuminating in this connection. He tells us that the word psychology

is ordinarily used to signify in our days and in the seats of learning in the Occident a study more or less cloudy, mostly beclouded with doubts and hypotheses, actual guesswork, meaning little more than a kind of mental physiology, practically nothing more than the working of the brain-mind in the lowest astral-psychical apparatus of the human mind. But in our philosophy the word psychology is used to mean something very different, and of a nobler character: we might call it pneumatology, or the science or the study of spirit, because all the inner faculties and powers of man ultimately spring from his spirit. But as this word pneumatology is an unusual one and might cause confusion, let us retain the word psychology. We mean by it the study of the inner economy of man, the interconnection of his principles, so to speak, or centers of energy or force — what the man really is inwardly. — Chapter 12

Theosophy, then, confidently offers this system of psychology, knowing that the person who will apply it to himself and the problems of his daily life will find it supremely practical. It is not new. For it was founded ages ago on the always-existing and unchangeable laws of that universe of which human beings — their nature, problems, and evolution — are an inseparable part.

It is not experimental. For it was developed and tested, and made as nearly infallible as anything in this world can be, by "the seers and sages of the ages," who, as G. de Purucker tells us, have

penetrated behind and beyond the veil of appearances; have gone behind that veil to the roots of things; have sent their souls deep into the womb of being and have brought back knowledge therefrom. Wonderful indeed are the systems of thought that these great seers and sages of the ages have formulated in human language, touching every phase of the human being; systems which are so symmetrical, so profound in philosophical and scientific reach, that every fact that exists in human psychology finds its proper niche, its proper pigeon-hole so to say, its exact lodgment, where it belongs. -- *The Masters and the Path of Occultism*

The only thing new today in this ancient system is its "formulation in human language" with a few necessary adjustments to the modern point of view. It stands as it has always stood, upon its demonstration of cosmic law, revealing man as a sevenfold being like the universe around him; and pointing out as it has always done the only road to happiness — harmony in thought and word and deed with the universal heart of impersonal love in which spiritually we all live and move and have our being.

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